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Approved For Release 2004/07/16 : CIA-RDP79T00912A000100010055-8

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# USSR Weekly Review

Supplement  
25 November 1977

State Department review completed

Top Secret

RP ASU 77-035C

25 November 1977

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USSR WEEKLY REVIEW  
SUPPLEMENT

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Soviets React Cautiously to Peking's  
Gestures on 60th Anniversary . . . . .1

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This publication is prepared by the USSR Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis, with occasional contributions from other offices within the National Foreign Assessment Center. The views presented are the personal judgments of analysts on significant events or trends in Soviet foreign and domestic affairs. Although the analysis centers on political matters, it discusses politically relevant economic or strategic trends when appropriate. Differences of opinion are sometimes aired to present consumers with a range of analytical views. Comments and

Soviets React Cautiously to Peking's Gestures on  
60th Anniversary

Moscow's response to certain political gestures made by Peking on the 60th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution has been guarded. While the Soviets may take some satisfaction from these isolated and equivocal symbols of civility, they are reacting cautiously and may suspect that the gestures are primarily intended to stir up concern in the West about possibilities of Sino-Soviet improved relations which the Chinese do not intend to allow to bear fruit. In this connection, the Soviets have taken special note of the strongly anti-Soviet ideological pronouncements that accompanied China's response to the event.

Chinese activities on the occasion of the 60th anniversary that seem to have political significance include the following:

- Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua attended the national day reception at the Soviet Embassy for the first time since 1966. Chinese attendance had not exceeded the vice minister level in the intervening years.
- For the first time since 1967, the 50th anniversary, Peking observed the occasion with an authoritative joint *People's Daily - Red Flag - Liberation Army Daily* editorial (which did, however, say some things unwelcome to Moscow, discussed below).
- Peking took the unusual step of publishing the customary anniversary message to the Soviet Union from the National People's Congress and the State Council in the *People's Daily*. The message was lengthier than usual.
- Peking elevated its representation at the annual October Revolution film reception in Peking. The reception this year was

attended by National People's Congress Vice Chairman Ngapo Ngawang Jigme. Since 1966 Chinese representation had been limited to officials of friendship associations.

-- The Chinese Ambassador in Tokyo attended the national day reception at the Soviet Embassy. Only six days previously, he had paid an unusual courtesy call on Soviet Ambassador Polyansky.

Taken together with other recent events such as agreement on some aspects of border river navigation and the arrival of a new Chinese Ambassador in Moscow, these Chinese political gestures seem to imply some desire to place state relations on a more correct basis--one of the goals Moscow has ostensibly sought for some time.

#### Reasons for Moscow's Suspicions

The cautious Soviet response is apparently conditioned by several factors. One is Soviet suspicion built up over the years that if the Chinese are taking any initiative, there must be an anti-Soviet reason. Another is that the Chinese gestures, while symbolic, are still only gestures. Their significance for the issues between Moscow and Peking remains to be seen. Moscow may also be suspicious that they have been made more for their effect on the US than the USSR. Additionally, the Chinese actions on 7 November were by no means totally benign. They contained elements reflecting the years of hostility between the two sides, and it is symptomatic that both sides have already begun to exploit these gestures to gain unilateral political advantage over the other.

What clearly rankles the Soviets most is the content of the joint editorial. It began by singing the praises of the October Revolution and citing its inspiration for the Chinese revolution. It quickly shifted into a polemic, however, asserting that the present Soviet "revisionist renegade clique" had departed from the path of the revolution, that this transformation of the first socialist state into social imperialism was a grave setback for the proletarian revolution, and that "the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union has provided the cause of proletarian revolution with rare material for learning by negative example." [redacted] the article seemed

calculated to give the appearance of reasonableness and flexibility while actually reiterating longstanding, hard-line Chinese positions.

Moscow's Riposte

This artifice has been particularly offensive to the Russians. In an uncommonly quick reaction, Radio Moscow two days later delivered a stinging response. It termed the editorial a "shameless slander" on "this sacred day" and lashed out at the Chinese for "dishing out such sensation-mongering lies while celebrating the Great October Revolution." This indignation was reiterated by one of Moscow's China watchers in a discussion with a US official on 15 November. He cited the editorial as "dirty" and a confirmation of the hypocritical nature of Peking's anniversary message. He expressed satisfaction that Moscow had not printed the message in the Soviet press. (Moscow had printed the Chinese messages in 1975 and 1976, but this year merely acknowledged its receipt.)

The Soviet Sinologist did admit that the Soviet Union "must welcome" Huang Hua's presence at the Soviet Embassy reception, but stressed that the Soviets will wait for "concrete steps," such as a response to one of the numerous Soviet proposals to Peking over the years for an improvement of relations, before being convinced that the Chinese have any real desire to improve them.

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Continuous Hopes

This sort of skirmishing will undoubtedly persist as each side continues to assess the other's intentions. At the moment, the judgment of the Soviets seems to have been concisely summed up by a Soviet Embassy official

He told a US Embassy officer on 11 November that he thought there was marginal room for improvement in state-to-state relations with China, but he did not see the events of the past few weeks as signaling any significant lessening of his country's problems with Peking.

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